

# HOW REGIMENT OF FERRETS PUT ARMY OF TRENCH RATS TO ROUT

(Correspondence Associated Press.)  
BEHIND THE BRITISH LINES IN FRANCE, Nov. 8.—There is a certain brave battalion in the British army which is known throughout the length and breadth of the line as "The Ferrets." The nickname was given them first of all because of their success in dealing with the rat nuisance in their section of the line, and the soldier who had most to do with combating the rats is known from Dunkirk to St. Quentin as "O. C. Rats," the initials being the regular British army abbreviation for "officer commanding."

The rats were probably worse in this battalion's section of the line last winter than anywhere else in Flanders, and many were the devices tried against the little enemy. Traps of all kinds were tried. Rat devouring dogs were brought up, but in vain. A cat with a tremendous reputation in the French village was purchased and did well at first, killing four rats in twenty-four

hours and intimidating many others. Thereupon the battalion made much of the victorious animal, to its undoing, for it adapted itself as if by instinct to the life of a regimental pet, that is, it ate as much it could of the men's rations, took the warmest corner available, and quit work. Finally the battalion staff held a war council, and dispatched one of its number to London to bring back three or four good ferrets.

In the trenches, the ferrets were an object of great interest. Private Thomas Merryfield emerged from obscurity and was assigned to take charge of the newcomers. From that day forward he was known to the army as O. C. Rats. He took his duties seriously, and immediately went into action against the little enemy that had been stealing food off the tables, running over officers' faces at night, chewing even the laces from men's boots.

The ferrets and their "O. C." put up some great hunts. There were

moments of great excitement when the rats bolted wholesale before the new attack and were clashed to death in the trench by the enthusiastic men. There were also moments of breathless anxiety, when one of the precious ferrets emerged from a bolt hole somewhere below the barbed wire and was reported steering for the German trenches. One day Merryfield won the censure of the authorities and the enthusiastic approval and praise of his comrades by retrieving a lost ferret from No Man's Land in daylight and under fire.

Little by little the art of rat hunting was learned by the whole battalion. Men became wise in ferret lore, cunning in interpreting the noises of an underground struggle between the antagonists. The rats have ever since given that section of the battle zone a wide berth and the fame of the winter's successful anti-rat offensive is known to all the army.

These field artillery batteries are divided into two kinds—those armed with the 77-centimetre cannon (the 3-inch) and those armed with light 4-inch field howitzers. The German 3-inch cannon has been much improved and its range greatly increased since 1914.

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# WAR PROVES GREAT IMPORTANCE OF ARTILLERY ON ALL FRONTS

(Correspondence Associated Press.)  
FRENCH PORT, Oct. 29.—The canteen armies have not been alone in recognizing the greater value of artillery as compared with infantry in the method of warfare in operation on all the European fronts since the cessation of the war of movement at the end of 1914.

A glance at the strength of the German field artillery branch at the opening of hostilities shows that it then consisted of 642 batteries. At present it is composed of 2,000 batteries at least. As the batteries now contain only four pieces instead of six, as at the beginning of the war, the calculation of the power of the artillery in the field must be based on the number of guns rather than that of batteries. Whereas in 1914 the German army possessed only 3,852 field guns, it now disposes of 8,000 if the minimum figure of 2,000 batteries with which it was furnished at the end of 1916 is taken as the basis of calculation.

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As to the German heavy artillery, the increase in the number of pieces

has been even greater in proportion than that of the field artillery. In peace time the German empire had organized twenty-four regiments of heavy artillery. Each regiment was composed of two battalions of four batteries, and each battery was armed with four guns, thus totalling 768 heavy guns.

As soon as the army had been mobilized in 1914, the German military authorities established new heavy artillery formations. Soon each artillery regiment of the regular army had attached to it a reserve regiment consisting of four batteries of skilled gunners, also a battalion of four batteries of landwehr, or second reservists, and, finally, a battalion of four batteries formed from among the third reservists or landsturm. When the arsenals and shell factories later had reached a higher level of production of guns and ammunition further batteries were formed from among the men of the Ersatz reserve. Since the first year of the war large numbers of the recruits of the younger classes which have been called out for service have been sent to the artillery branch. By the end of 1916 the number of heavy batteries had been multiplied more than five times and in the course of 1917 further additions have been made to the total.

Of the German big guns 25 per

cent are long range cannon and the remaining 75 per cent howitzers. The most numerous of their long range guns are 4-inch, 4½-inch, 5-inch and 6-inch, but they possess also batteries of 8.7-inch, 9.7-inch, 11-inch and 15-inch long range guns, although these are very few in number. Their howitzers are for the most part of 6-inch calibre, but besides these they have in line batteries of 11-inch, 12-inch and 17-inch howitzers.

Germany had not developed any liking for mountain guns before this war, but she has been forced to change her views by the developments of the fighting, in the Voorges for instance, and now has twenty batteries of mountain guns, six pieces of 3-inch calibre rapid fire to a battery, and also has formed several batteries of 4-inch mountain howitzers.

Trench artillery as well has been a development of this war, and the German army is now well provided with weapons of various kinds for use in the advanced lines. Its trench mortars range in calibre from three inches to ten inches. Finally, the small trench cannon of 1½-inch, 2-inch and 2½-inch calibre have become very numerous in all sectors of the line.

The personnel of the gunnery branch of the German army has become nearly as great in numbers as that of the infantry.

## WAR STAMP TAXES ARE EFFECTIVE HEREAFTER

(By Associated Press.)  
WASHINGTON, Dec. 1.—War stamp taxes are effective today. The treasury expects they will produce \$100,000,000 annually.

Beginning with today's business, brokers, clearing houses, exchanges and persons engaged in stock, produce or merchandise transactions, must keep strict account of all taxable dealings.

(By Associated Press.)  
RIO JANEIRO, Nov. 28.—The Brazilian government has arranged to use thirty German ships now in Brazilian ports for transporting provisions for the allies.

(By Associated Press.)  
THE HAGUE, Dec. 1.—Queen Wilhelmina has indorsed the constitutional revision bill which was finally adopted Thursday by the state's general. The bill provides for universal suffrage and proportional representation.

(By Associated Press.)  
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# PAPER MONEY FORCES DOWN VALUE OF ROUBLE

(Correspondence Associated Press.)  
LONDON, Nov. 7.—Writing immediately after the Maximilian coup in Petrograd, the Daily Telegraph's former Petrograd correspondent, now in London, said:

"One of the most disquieting symptoms in revolutionary Russia is the devaluation of the rouble. It is no longer merely an international matter as it was during the earlier phases of the war. The cause then was the practical cessation of Russia's export trade and her consequent inability to pay with goods for her vast imports of war material. Now it is mainly due to the flooding of the country with paper money. The depreciation shows itself in

a stupendous rise of prices and wages. The chairman of one of the largest business federations in Russia stated that the government was having to pay 150 roubles each for shells which it contracted for at 64 roubles."

In the London market yesterday the rouble exchange went up to as much as 380 roubles per ten pounds sterling, making the value of the rouble barely sixpence. In exchange circles it was reported difficult to deal at that figure and with regard to the output of paper money in Russia it was reported the inflation is now greater than ever and amounts to as much as one hundred million roubles daily on the basis of the normal exchange.

# PRIORITIES ARE IN NEW TANGLE

GARFIELD AND HOOVER FORCES  
IN A CLASH OVER WHAT  
SHOULD GO FIRST.

(By Associated Press.)  
WASHINGTON, Dec. 1.—Requests from different government quarters for priority of transportation for food, fuel and munitions has thrown the whole question of preferential shipment into a tangle. The committee on priority of transportation, of which Robert S. Lovett is chairman, was trying today to clear the situation. Acting on the suggestion of Fuel Administrator Garfield, the general operating committee of eastern railroads yesterday gave coal and coke shipments right of way to clear congested terminals. Dr. Garfield has

requested of the priority committee a general order giving coal the tracks.

Last night the food administration announced it had entered a strong protest with the priority committee against giving priority over food shipments to coal or any other freight. The situation is further complicated by demands of the war and navy departments for preferential rights to the movement of their supplies.

## GERMAN LOAN.

(By Associated Press.)  
COPENHAGEN, Dec. 1.—Tabulation of subscriptions to the seventh German loan show that over a fourth of the total of twelve and a half billions was contributed in subscriptions of over a million marks each. 1,032 subscribers averaging over three millions.

The sixth loan had only 770 subscribers in the super-million class. There was a marked decrease in the number of small subscribers, as

# DAKOTA FARMERS WANT 50 MILLION

HEAD OF NON-PARTISAN LEAGUE  
PLEADS FOR LOAN; TELLS OF  
CROP FAILURE.

(By Associated Press.)  
WASHINGTON, Dec. 1.—President A. C. Townley of the National Non-Partisan league has asked President Wilson to urge upon congress an appropriation of \$50,000,000 for the purchase of seed and feed to be sold at cost to farmers of the Northwest, who, he says, are in financial straits because of the failure of the crops in two successive years.

Mr. Townley told the president that the farmers in North Dakota, Montana, Kansas, Nebraska and parts of Oklahoma and Minnesota, whom he represented, had answered the country's call for more food by increasing their acreage this year, and that the failure of the enlarged crops had hit them heavily. Added to that, he said, was a shortage of grass and feed, which compelled the farmers to sell their cattle.

During the conference Mr. Townley pledged the president the allegiance of the Northwest farmers.

well as the total number of subscribers. The only classes showing an increase in number of subscribers or total subscribed are those above half a million, which are responsible for over a third of the loan. These figures are indicative of the extent to which the loan was subscribed by war supply interests.

# NEW BREAD LAWS FOR THE FRENCH

INSUFFICIENT HARVESTS MAKE  
STRICT REGULATIONS  
NECESSARY.

(By Associated Press.)  
PARIS, Dec. 1.—The cabinet has approved the measures of Victor Boret, minister of provisions, regulating the distribution of bread. Closer restrictions have become necessary because of insufficient harvests and the limitations of tonnage for importations.

The basic principle of the new rationing is that none except agriculturists consuming their own crops may have a greater ration than the soldiers at the front. Individual bread cards will be established for towns of more than 20,000 population, and the state requisitions all cereals.

Bread will continue to be sold by weight, but the form and weight may vary. Fancy bread may be sold by the piece, but it must be made of the same flour as the ordinary article and differ only in form and the manner of baking.

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## PRO-GERMAN PROPAGANDA.

(By Associated Press.)  
RIO DE JANEIRO, Nov. 28.—A new paper, published in Portuguese, called the Correio De Berlin, has begun a pro-German propaganda, opening its campaign with anathemas upon the United States, which it declares has coerced the Latin republics to break relations with Germany.

Desperate attempts are being made here to undermine American solidarity, but they are not making much impression on the Brazilian people.

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